



Black's Fort Messenger

The Official Newsletter of the Town of Abingdon, VA

VOLUME II, ISSUE I

JULY 2008

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The British Are Coming

Everyone look for the single lantern hanging in the church steeple this October! Not really, but if you see a single lantern displayed, it's because the British are coming by land ("One if by land, and two if by sea...", *Paul Revere's Ride*, by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow). This October marks the 230th Charter year of the Town of Abingdon. To mark this occasion, the town will be hosting some 40 plus visitors from our Twin Town, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, England and holding festivities throughout the weekend of October 3-5. Although the actual 'birthday' falls on October 7, 1778, we've decided to celebrate early...to get as much celebrating in as possible, of course.

Mayor Patrick Lonergan and two members of the Abingdon, OX Town Council, as well as members of the Abingdon District and Twin Towns Society will

Left: Seal of the Abingdon And District Twin Town Society



be arriving the evening of September 30th and staying through the morning of October 6th. Throughout their stay, our guests will enjoy everything from brunch with our Mayor Lois Humphreys to a town dance, concert, a history exhibition, tour of the region, the farmers market, shopping and even an Emory and Henry football game. The week will conclude with a civic dinner at the Martha Washington Inn with our own Town Council, other regional and State elected officials and invited guests.

As part of the Twinning process, our British guests will require lodging with hosts families. This provides an exchange of culture that isn't experienced through staying in local hotels. If you are interested in becoming a host family, please contact Mr. Garrett Jackson (gjackson@abingdon.com) or Ms. Tenille Montgomery (mtenille@abingdon.com) for more information.

Right: Coat of Arms of Abingdon-on-Thames



From the Corner Office

Wow, what a summer so far! Since our spring newsletter, things have been hopping around Town. We have a new Town Clock as a focal point and three new restaurants are in the works, with one having already opened and one just days away. Hats off to Pop Ellis's Soda Shoppe for bringing back a blast from the past. For those of you who were not around in Abingdon in the 1960's and 1970's you can now have a taste of what it was like downtown for us locals. My eyes are now on the other new restaurants to cement their place in the Abingdon downtown tradition as well.

We also had Abingdon's first ever Blues Festival featuring several regional and national blues bands at Latture Field on June 28th. Then, a few days later, *The Beatles*, oops, I meant "*The Return*", rocked us back in time with the songs of *The Beatles* as the fireworks painted the sky at the Coomes Recreation Center on the 4th of July. I could not have ask for a better way to begin summer in Abingdon. "Abingdon's New Music Experience" has been a huge hit thus far.

On the business front, I want to extend a big welcome to two newcomers to the town ranks. Please welcome, Elisabeth Iskra, our new Abingdon Main Street Director, who has already been working hard to revitalize the charm and appeal of downtown shopping and dining. Keep your eyes open for this lady. She is a real hard worker and a go getter. Elisabeth is currently located in the Abingdon Convention and Visitors Center. And speaking of go getters, also make welcome Jim Cowart, Abingdon's new Director of Grants and Economic Development. Jim is a guy with many new ideas to invigorate the Town's growth as both a business stronghold and tourist destination. He will be actively working with our Planning Department and the Department of Tourism to make these things happen. Jim is currently located on the 3rd floor of the Municipal Building.

What's next? Keep your eyes open for our new rolling Tourism kiosk which will first appear in front of the Fields-Penn House. Tourism Director Myra Cook, Economic Development Coordinator, Jim Cowart and I have all collaborated to put this together. The kiosk will provide on street information to tourists and patrons who need directions on shopping, lodging, restaurants, and attractions. Visitor guides will be available and small souvenirs will be sold from the kiosk. Also, be on the lookout for Depot Square to finish soon and keep a watchful eye out for all the antique cars every Saturday from 6:00pm-10:00pm at Abingdon's "Cruise In" occurring on the Municipal Parking Lot. Antique cars across the street from an authentic soda shoppe, what a fit.

As we move toward the annual Virginia Highlands Festival, let me encourage each of our residents to make our many out of town guests both welcome and envious of what Abingdon is all about... a small eclectic Town with a lot of charm and a lot going on. Also, let me

encourage everyone to come out and in the words of our soon to be famous music events slogan "**BE THERE!**" With that said, Grammy Winner, Chubby Checker will "twist" into Town on July 26th, so believe me when I say "**BE THERE**" or you will be square. Come out and shake your hips with a true living legend.

Hey!, I almost forgot, we're moving on up. The Office of Town Manager and Town Clerk are moving to the newly finished 3rd floor of the Municipal Building this month. Come by and check out our new digs. As we move up others are moving in. The Building Inspection department will be coming back to Town Hall in a move to make it more convenient for future builders to get permits and work through the Town's planning and engineering departments. Given this move my next letter will come from "The Upper Deck" opposed to the "The Corner Office"

October will start with a bang as we celebrate Abingdon's 230th Charter Celebration and the Abingdon Fire Department's 200th birthday. During this time, we will welcome guests from Abingdon, England our Twin Town overseas. So as our cover story accurately states, the British are indeed coming.

Believe it or not, there is much more to come, so until next time, I hope to see you out and about. "**BE THERE!**"

Very truly yours,



Our Past Meets Our Future

The location of Black's Fort has long been contested by members of the community. The fort which protected settlers from Indian attack was one of the premier frontier forts of its time. Last year, town staff, members of the Historical Society of Washington County and a local Eagle Scout candidate, Jason Dreyzehner, have been preparing an interpretive marker that will tell some of the early story of Black's Fort and the man for whom it was named, Captain Joseph Black.

Eagle Scout Jason Dreyzehner has recently completed his Eagle Community Project which consisted of beautification of the Virginia Creeper Trail Head and landscaping a location for the marker to be displayed. In addition, he has contacted a living descendant of the Black's, Mr. David Black of Maryville, TN, who has provided information regarding Captain Joseph Black and his story after leaving Abingdon.

On August 3, 2008, a ceremony to unveil the marker will take place at the Virginia Creeper Trailhead on Green Spring Road in Abingdon. Brief remarks will be given, and a special guest will be on hand to make the day an even more momentous occasion.

Below: This plate, depicting what Black's Fort may have looked like, was hand painted by local artist Miss Marcie Kelly (b.1871, d.1947) of Abingdon. The plate is owned by Catherine S. McConnell of Abingdon.



People You Should Know

Edward Morgan– Vice Mayor

Mr. Morgan is a 1971 graduate of Emory and Henry College with a degree in Political Science and a minor in Economics. In 1975, he received a one year independent travel and study fellowship through the Ford Foundation's Rural Leadership Development Program. As a Ford Fellow, he traveled in the United States, Canada, and Great Britain studying a variety of community development projects that had potential application for our region. Mr. Morgan was instrumental in developing several community development ventures in this region. He was involved in the early development of the Holston Mountain Arts and Crafts Cooperative (the Cave House), the Whitetop Mountain Maple Syrup project and Frazer Fir Christmas tree farming.

Mr. Morgan and his wife, Helen celebrated their 35th wedding anniversary on April 1st of this year. Helen is a hand weaver and has a studio in the Arts Depot. Their son, Peter, is an artist. He specializes in ceramic sculpture and currently teaches at Gettysburg College. Mr. Morgan and his family attend St Thomas Episcopal Church and have been actively involved in organizing Peace Lutheran Worshipping Community. Mr. Morgan has been for 21 years with United Medical, a division of the Lincare company and currently serves as the Manager. The business provides home respiratory care services to patients throughout southwest Virginia. He enjoys playing the fiddle, fly fishing, and bird watching in his spare time. He is a coauthor of the *Virginia Creeper Trail Companion*, an interpretive guide to Abingdon's favorite biking and hiking trail. Mr. Morgan has also had several articles published in *Fly Fisherman Magazine*. In previous years he has also reviewed Barter Theatre plays and wrote a regular nature column for the *Washington County News*.

First elected to the Abingdon Town Council in 2000 and again in May 2008 Mr. Morgan currently is serving as Vice-Mayor. While on council, he has served on the Recreation Commission, Planning Commission, Tourism Advisory Board, Tree Commission, Cemetery Commission and as council liaison for both the King's Mountain and Taylor's Hill Neighborhood Rehabilitation programs. He was also involved in a review of the town's historic preservation ordinance.



Jim Smith



Jim Smith was born in Lincoln County, WV and attended Hamlin High School. He graduated from West Virginia Institute of Technology in Montgomery, WV with an Associate Degree in Electrical Technology and a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering. Jim has taken graduate engineering courses at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville and psychology from the University of Maryland. He is a registered Professional Engineer in the State of Virginia. Mr. Smith served in the U.S. Army from 1965 through 1968 and completed tours in Germany, Ethiopia and Vietnam. He has been employed as an engineer for the Tennessee Valley Authority, RLS and Company and served as Engineer and Vice-President for Terrock Corporation. Jim has been employed by the Town since March 2001 and now serves as Town Engineer and Director of Wastewater Division.

Mr. Smith and wife, Sherry, moved to Abingdon in August 1980 and have been married for 37 years. They have two sons, Craig of Huntersville, NC and Paul of Langhorne, PA and one 11-month old grandson, Daniel, who loves to see his grandparents on the weekends.

In his spare time, Jim enjoys relaxing on the skeet field with friends and teaching the game of skeet. As a serious skeet shooting competitor, he has won several Virginia state championships and has held the highest state skeet shooting average for four years and a member of the State Team for seven years. As the World Skeet Shooting Championships in San Antonio, TX in 2006 he was World Senior Champion with a total score of 546 X 550. At the same shoot, he and son Craig were the World Two man Family Champions with a total score of 1091 X 1100. In 2007, he was selected as a member of the Senior All-American Team.

K-VA-T's Food City Stores – Dedicated to Superior Community Involvement

K-VA-T Food Stores, Inc. is the corporate banner of a supermarket chain operating in three states under the name Food City. The Food City banner dates back to 1918 with a store in Greeneville, TN, but K-VA-T Food Stores real beginning was in 1955 when Jack C. Smith (founder), his father, cousin, and uncle opened their first store in Grundy, VA. Since that time, Food City has grown in leaps by acquisitions of several Piggly Wiggly operations in Southwest VA and Eastern KY, along with Quality Food/Food City, White Stores, Winn Dixie and BI-LO units in East Tennessee. The company has also grown by expansion into new areas, filling in gaps in the trade area with new units and always remodeling and replacing current units to stay on the cutting edge of grocery technology, product selection and consumer demand.

K-VA-T Food Stores follows national marketing trends. "In the last several years," Steve Smith, President and CEO said, "we have branched out into the pharmacy and fuel businesses." The company has 70 pharmacies and 53 fuel stations.

Steve Smith was raised in Grundy, where his father, Jack Smith, opened his first Piggly Wiggly store in 1955. Steve "grew up" in and around his father's store, quickly learning the basics. As the company grew so did Steve's interest and knowledge of store operations and the grocery industry. Now headquartered in Abingdon, K-VAT Food Stores, Inc. operates 91 Food City supermarkets throughout the tri-state regions of Southwest Kentucky, Southwest Virginia and Northeast Tennessee and 7 Super Dollar Discount Foods limited assortment locations.

Dedicated to serving the communities in which he lives and operates, Smith and Food City support countless organizations, including Boy Scouts, United Way, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, American Cancer Society, East Tennessee Children's Hospital, Santa Pals, YWCS, Boys & Girls Clubs, American Diabetes Association and numerous others like "Apples for Students", in which the company has donated over 11 million dollars in equipment to schools in the K-VA-T trade area. Food City also partners with farmers in Southwest VA and Northeast TN to bring in locally raised produce and meats to its customers which helps to mitigate transportation costs and resultant air pollution, assists local farmers and satisfies customer demand. Food City has also been an official NASCAR sponsor for the last 17 years, partnering with the Bristol Motor Speedway, as well as, sponsoring the Food City Family Race Night, a charity event held each spring and late summer, where the NASCAR drivers sign autographs.

K-VA-T Food Stores has its own 1.1 million square foot distribution center, Mid-Mountain Foods, located in Abingdon, VA. The company also offers customers private label choices under the labels "Food City," "Food Club," "Paws," "Valu Time," "Full Circle," "Top Care," "World Classic," and a few others through its participation in the Topco cooperative. A subsidiary of K-VA-T Food Stores -- Misty Mountain Spring Water, L.L.C. -- bottles spring water for sale in Food City stores and under a private label for other customers.

K-VA-T Food Stores, Inc. continues to grow and share its growth with associates. "About 16% of the company is owned by our associates, and that continues to grow every year through our profit-sharing plan," Steve Smith said.

K-VA-T Food Stores, Inc. ranked 40th on the latest (2008) Progressive Grocer's list of America's 50 largest Supermarket Chains, 55th on Supermarket News "Top 75 North American Food Retailers" (January, 2008) with over 1.6 billion dollars in sales and 269th on Forbes Magazine's "List of the largest privately-held companies in 2007."



Jim Cowart, Abingdon's newly hired Director of Grants and Economic Development, was not born here, but he got here as quickly as he could. Jim hit the ground running on May 19th, his first day on the job. He immediately began supporting Abingdon's existing business and creative economies, through grants research, product and services promotion, educational opportunities, community awareness and networking.

In order to help broaden and diversify Abingdon's job base, Jim also began working with other local, regional and state Economic Development agencies to develop and attract eco-friendly/green, sustainable businesses to Abingdon that reflect the high quality of life and sense of community that Abingdon is known for. He is also working to develop, organize and coordinate community events and outreach that helps brand Abingdon as an artistic destination and brings together the citizens of Abingdon to further enhance our strong sense of community.

Currently, one of Jim's major over-arching goals is to re-establish an Abingdon-based newspaper in order to create greater awareness and utilization of existing Abingdon-specific events and business offerings. Unlike its predecessor, this community building tool may be a combination of print and internet-based media, but, just exactly like its predecessor, every issue will be all Abingdon.

Jim wishes to thank Abingdon for this opportunity to be of service to the Town he loves and wants to remind us that "We Are Abingdon!"



From the Mustering Grounds

The Town of Abingdon in conjunction with planner Hill Studios has developed a comprehensive plan for the Mustering Grounds. Plans for the grounds, located at 702 Colonial Road, include the removal of the modern fence to be replaced with a period style fence, renovation of the existing garage to become a Visitor/Interpretation Center and development of an audio guide for the Mustering Grounds and the Battle of Kings Mountain. Of course, all of this ties into the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail that begins in Abingdon and continues to Kings Mountain, South Carolina. The Abingdon trail begins at the cul-de-sac located at the end of French Moore, Jr. Boulevard and ends at Stonemill Road and can be used for nature walks, jogging or just relaxing. National Park Service Superintendent of the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail, Paul Carson says to stand on the ground where, in 1780, Washington County Militiamen mustered and walk down the path that led American to freedom is an experience not to miss. In addition, the National Park Service with help from Superintendent Carson will be donating a kiosk to place at the mustering grounds to help visitors learn about the march and subsequent battle.

There are several upcoming events scheduled for the Mustering Grounds, including a Colonial Trade Fair that will begin and be opened each day from July 26 through August 10. The planner for the event Dave Kazmark said the fair will feature a rotating group of 20 crafts people that specialize in everything colonial from clothing to flintlocks. In conjunction with the trade fair Dave says the Black's Fort Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution will provide entertainment with their "Living History" portrayals. Also taking part in the activi-

ties will be the Overmountain Victory Trail Association as well as the General William Campbell Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution.

September 20th-24th will be the celebration of the 228th Anniversary of the mustering of Washington County Militiamen. The event will be opened to the public on Saturday September 20th and Sunday 21st and will feature 16 different stations that show what it was like to live in the 18th century. Try your hand at bayoneting or learn how lace is made, these are only two of the 16 stations you can enjoy. A special guest appearance of the Guilford Courthouse Fife and Drum Corps on both Saturday and Sunday will be an event you do not want to miss. The Historical Society of Washington County, Virginia, the Blacks' Fort Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Overmountain Victory Trail Association, the Washington County Board of Supervisors, the Washington County School System, the Town of Abingdon and the National Park Service join together to present this weekend that is steeped in history. Following the weekend events over one thousand 4th grade students from St. Anne's Catholic School, Sullins Academy, the Russell County School System, the Smyth County School System and the Washington County School System will partake in the 16 stations and learn about history up close and personal.

For more information please call the Abingdon Convention & Visitors Bureau 276-676-2282 or online at www.abingdon.com

Courtesy of Rick Humphreys, Chairperson, the Mustering Grounds Committee

Parks and Recreation



Fourth of July Celebration

This year our 4th of July celebrations were like no other, beginning when the Coomes Center opened and not stopping until the last vendor left. In the outdoor pool there were games and activities throughout the day for kids of all ages. The live poolside entertainment was a great addition that kept everyone rockin' while they were swimmin'. Food vendors were also on hand selling everything from hot dogs to funnel cakes and ice cream. Large inflatable play structures were brought in for the youth while many enjoyed the bands on the main stage. Montage started the afternoon out which lead up to the feature band of the evening, The Return, a Beatles cover band. As the performance, as well as the night, came to a close the fireworks were a spectacular sight for all to see. We would

like to thank all those involved who made the evening a great success, especially the employees of the Coomes Center, the police department and fire department. Without everyone's dedication, events such as this would not be possible.

The 2008 Ultimate Challenge

The Coomes Center was proud to be the host facility for the annual Ultimate Challenge Swim Meet. With the help of the Bristol Area Swim Association and the Coomes Area Swim Team we had a successful event with about 500 swimmers and spectators from all over the East coast. The meet began on Friday, June 27th and lasted thru Sunday, June 29th. A "Beijing" Barbeque was provided for all of the participants on Saturday evening from 4:00 to 7:00. *Midnight Express* was there to provide entertainment for all the guests. We would like to thank all of the local businesses for being so generous with their donations for door prizes. Due to the success of this year's meet we are already planning for next year.



Abingdon Fire Department Celebrations



The Abingdon Fire Department will celebrate the 200th anniversary of their charter with an Open House and special activities on October 4, 2008. A free lunch for the entire community will begin at noon and a special re-dedication of the fire station in memory of two former fire chiefs will begin at 1:30. Fire station tours and equipment displays will continue all afternoon. The Fire Station is located at 316 Park Street. More information will follow closer to the event on the Town of Abingdon website www.abingdon.com and the Abingdon Fire department website www.abingdonfire.org



Down on Main Street



There's a new sign in town. Abingdon's Virginia Main Street Community signs were recently installed at Rugby Terrace and along West Main Street by the railroad tracks, just in time to welcome thousands of cyclists from the Bike Virginia Crooked Road Tour. The signs encourage visitors and citizens alike to "visit downtown!"



Main Street Merchant Focus

"A Likely Yarn" has just opened on East Main Street within ZazzyZ'z Coffee House and Booksellers. It features yarns of all types from traditional wool, silk and cotton to more exotic fibers derived from kelp, corn, alpaca or bamboo. There are hand-dyed, hand-spun and hand-painted varieties too in addition to notions, patterns and gifts. Owner Janet Woolwine declares that "from this tiny jewel box of a store, we will take you to a Xanadu of fibers! We have yarns that hail from the steeps of Nepal to right here in Washington County." Hours of operation are Tu/W/F 10-5, Th 10-7 and Su 1-5pm. The shop also offers demonstrations and classes. Call 628-2143 for more information.

Main Street Calendar

July

A lonely window outside Plumb Alley Beads and Gifts will be transformed in time for the Virginia Highlands Festival. Christened the new Main Street Kiosk, it will feature our merchants from Main Street as well as promote upcoming special events. Pieces from Robert Weisfeld's Star Museum will be on display through the festival.

August

The new Taste of Main Street cookbook will be for sale in local stores beginning August 2nd. It will also be available at the Main Street Booth during our ShopAfter6 event (see related story below.) Priced smartly at \$15, the cookbook features favorite recipes submitted by friends of Main Street. Get your copy today!

Shop**After6!** Join our local merchants as they celebrate summer by staying open late 'til eight the second Saturday of the festival, August 2, 2008. Sidewalk sales, door prizes and other surprises await intrepid evening shoppers.

September

Kathy Frazier, principal architect of Frazier Associates and Virginia Main Street design consultant, will present "Exterior Design Treatments for Historic Districts" Thursday, September 4, 2008 at 7:30pm, location TBA.

Coming Attractions

Movies on Main at Kiwanis Park

Join Us!

"Our role at Main Street is to bring different groups together to develop projects that will build on what we have to help our local, small businesses thrive. The Main Street Four Point Approach (Design, Promotion, Economic Restructuring and Organization) relies on community input and involvement. We invite anyone interested in planning for the future of Abingdon to join us as a volunteer," states Elisabeth Iskra, new Executive Director of Abingdon Main Street. "We welcome your ideas and energy...and you'll have fun too!"

Prior to joining Abingdon Main Street, Ms. Iskra was a planner and grant writer for the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission based in Marion, VA. She holds a Masters of Science in Planning degree from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville with a focus on historic preservation and sustainable development. Ms. Iskra currently resides in Emory, VA with her husband, John Iskra, Math Department Chair at Emory and Henry College, and their two children, Nathaniel and Theo.

To get more information on how you can work with Abingdon Main Street, stop by the office located on the first floor of the Abingdon Convention and Visitors Bureau, 335 Cummings Street or call 698-5667. Ms. Iskra can also be reached at eiskra@abingdon.com.

New Additions to the Town



The Town of Abingdon was recently deeded the Summers Law Office from the Summers Family heirs and the Washington County Historical Society. The law office is located at 120 N. Court Street and is now the office of the Virginia Highlands Festival. This was the law office of Lewis Preston Summers also known for "*History of Southwest Virginia and Washington County*". This historical building is a wonderful asset to the Town of Abingdon and will be put to great use.



If you have not noticed the fountain in front of the Municipal Building has been replaced with a Verdin four-faced clock. The fountain was in need of repairs so rather than spend more money to replace the fountain the Town opted to bring something new to the scenery. The Verdin Company Clock stands 12 feet high, is lighted at night and has many different chime options. The brick that was removed from the fountain was used to build a planter around the clock. Be sure to listen for the chimes every fifteen minutes!



The Abingdon Market Pavilion received a new addition to the cupola, a sculptured weather vane. The hand wrought Rooster sits atop the Market Pavilion. Bill Gable, a local blacksmith, hand-forged this work of art....its works, too!



The New Abingdon Music Experience

The Town has had an exciting spring and summer with all the music in the air. The “BE THERE” music events started in April with the Highlands Jazz Festival, featuring Charles Goodwin and his orchestra along with the Dixie Land Band.

We kicked off the summer with a dance at the SW Virginia Higher Education Center with The Gentlemen and Their Lady followed the very next day by a concert at the Abingdon Market Pavilion with the Collegians.



Bike Virginia rolled into town June 23 and enjoyed Abingdon’s hospitality for two days of touring the back roads, eating at the wonderful restaurants and listening to local talent. The Dixie Bee-Liners and Susan Brown and Friends entertained the 2,000 bicycle riders with the best bluegrass, blues and country music that can be found anywhere. There were local restaurants and vendors set up to feed the bikers and locals that came out to enjoy the evening.

The First Annual Abingdon Blues Festival, held June 28 was a major success, according to the fans, when ask about the artists that were performing. Opening up the Festival was Old, Fat and Sloe, a regional



group that has a big following; following Old, Fat and Sloe was the King Bees, Blue Mother Tupelo, Lightnin’ Charlie, who is a local favorite, another set of the King Bees and then rounding out the evening was the sounds of Jake and Elwood’s Blues Revue. Food vendors kept the fans happy and the music made them mellow.



Coming up for the rest of the “BE THERE” music events, we will hear Chubby Checkers on July 26 for the Street Party; Jimmy Fleenor and the Dixieland Band at the Park on Main, across from the Post Office on August 16 at 7:30; Secrets concert at the Abingdon Market Pavilion, September 6; October 4 an all day event at the Abingdon Market Pavilion area with vendors, re-enactors, a chili cook-off and lots more, ending with a concert by the Amazing Rhythm Aces going on stage at 7 PM; October 25 will be Sleepy Hollow which is another all day event.



Article and Photos Courtesy of Abingdon Convention & Visitors Bureau, Myra D. Cook and Garrett Jackson

Thank you for 24 years, Bob Howard



Bob Howard says he is looking forward to being able to relax. As of June 30, Bob ended his 24 years of service as a member of the Abingdon Town Council. He will have more free time than he has had in over two decades. "We have plenty of work to do around the house," Bob Howard says. He will miss the people he has worked with, but having time to get some projects completed sounds really good. Bob enjoys his work as a volunteer fireman and hopes to spend more time at the Abingdon Fire Station.

During his time on council, Bob served on the District Three Government Cooperative, the Board of Architecture Review, and the Sports Complex Committee. During the last two years, he served as Vice Mayor. Bob is proud of the infrastructure improvements made during his tenure and appreciates how well the town council members worked together. Mr. Howard will be greatly missed.

Creeper Trail Anniversary Approaching

This year, the Virginia Creeper Trail will celebrate twenty-one years since being designated a National Scenic Recreation Trail. Congress made the designation in 1986 and the formal dedication was held in June of 1987.

In the intervening years, not even the visionary founders who worked and lobbied to turn the abandoned rail bed into a multi-use trail could have predicted its phenomenal success. A 2004 study published by researchers from the USDA and University of Georgia estimated the annual trail traffic to be 130,172 users. With the growth in popularity of the trail, that number today is likely in excess of 200,000.

The Town of Abingdon purchased the rail line easement in 1982 for the mere sum of \$25,000. That same 2004 study estimated that the trail now generates between \$2.3 and \$3.9 million annually in local economic impact, making this perhaps the single best municipal investment in the town's history.

A full list of those who originally participated in acquiring the land and converting it to a

trail would never be possible, but no mention of the trail's origins would be complete without citing Dr. David Brillhart, Dr.

French Moore, Al Bradley, Brent Remsburg, Congressman Rick Boucher, and Dr. Mel Heiman.

Those who enjoy the Creeper Trail's benefits today are indebted for their vision and civic action to preserve and develop the trail. Today, the Creeper Trail Club, a volunteer organization, continues to advocate and work in this same spirit. An anniversary celebration is currently being planned. Details will be posted on the Creeper Trail Club's website (www.vacreepertrail.org) when they become available.

Courtesy of Link Elmore, President, Virginia Creeper Trail Club, a nonprofit organization.



Heard 'Round Town



Above: Town Manager Greg Kelly donates Blood for "Operation Silent Hero"

"Operation Silent Hero" was conducted on May 6th as a combined effort between the Washington County Sheriff's Office and the Abingdon Police Department. Our initial challenge was to encourage local law enforcement agencies to donate blood, but the scope quickly changed to include federal, state, and local police, fire, and EMS workers. In addition, the focus of the event was expanded to include a bone marrow donor registry drive.

Lt. Mike Olinger of the Washington County Sheriff's Office was the mastermind behind the project and a tireless worker who arranged the event in conjunction with Johnston Memorial Hospital. Mike also collected several thousand dollars in donations for donor door prizes.

The event was a tremendous success, collecting 111 units of blood and 37 enrollees in the bone marrow donor registry. We had a very large number of first time donors, who reported that the collection process was nothing like they imagined it would be. The event was so successful that we want to make this an annual event. We are already planning for the next drive, which will be the first Tuesday in May 2009.

Mike and I would like to express our appreciation to all who participated in "Operation Silent Hero." Without your help, this would not have been possible. We hope to see you all again at our next event May, 2009.

Courtesy of Chief Tony Sullivan, Town of Abingdon Chief of Police



Left and Right: Mr. Jason Berry and Mr. Edward Morgan were sworn in for their terms on Abingdon Town Council by Circuit Court Clerk Tricia Phipps. This is Mr. Berry's first term to serve and Mr. Morgan's third term to serve.



Left: Recognition of Sergeant Camille Finney for ten years of service to the Abingdon Police Department.



Right: Recognition of Lt. Bill Snodgrass for thirty years of service to the Abingdon Police Department.

Calendar of Events

| | | | |
|-------------|----|---|----------------|
| July | 2 | Board of Architectural Review @ Town Hall | 5:00pm |
| | 4 | Independence Day (Offices Closed) | |
| | 4 | 230 th Abingdon Anniversary Kick Off @ Coomes Center | 12:00pm |
| | 7 | Council Work Session @ Town Hall | 5:30pm |
| | 7 | Council Meeting @ Town Hall | 7:30pm |
| | 15 | Board of Zoning Appeals @ Town Hall | 6:00pm |
| | 21 | Tree Commission @ Town Hall | 7:30pm |
| | 26 | Virginia Highlands Festival Begins | |
| | 27 | Recreation Commission @ Town Hall | 5:00pm |
| | 30 | Planning Commission @ Town Hall | 7:00pm |
| | 30 | EVA Board @ Johnston Memorial Hospital | 12:30pm |
| Aug | 4 | Council Work Session @ Town Hall | 5:30pm |
| | 4 | Council Meeting @ Town Hall | 7:30pm |
| | 6 | Board of Architectural Review @ Town Hall | 5:00pm |
| | 10 | Virginia Highlands Festival Ends | |
| | 12 | Board of Zoning Appeals @ Town Hall | 5:00pm |
| | 18 | Tree Commission @ Town Hall | 6:00pm |
| | 25 | Planning Commission @ Town Hall | 7:00pm |
| Sept | 27 | EVA Board @ Johnston Memorial Hospital | 12:30pm |
| | 1 | Labor Day (Offices Closed) | |
| | 2 | Council Work Session @ Town Hall | 5:30pm |
| | 2 | Council Meeting @ Town Hall | 7:30pm |
| | 3 | Board of Architectural Review @ Town Hall | 5:00pm |
| | 6 | Secrets Concert @ Market Pavilion | 7:00pm-10:00pm |
| | 8 | Washington County Fair Begins | |
| | 9 | Board of Zoning Appeals @ Town Hall | 5:00pm |
| | 13 | Washington County Fair Ends | |
| | 15 | Tree Commission @ Town Hall | 7:30pm |
| | 20 | Overmountain Victory Trail Celebration Begins | |
| | 22 | Planning Commission @ Town Hall | 7:00pm |
| | 24 | Overmountain Victory Trail Celebration Ends | |
| | 24 | EVA Board @ Johnston Memorial Hospital | 12:30pm |
| | 28 | Recreation Commission @ Town Hall | 5:00pm |

(Please visit www.abingdon.com for more information)

Town of Abingdon

Office Hours: 8:30am-5:00pm Phone Number: (276) 628-3167

133 W. Main Street

P.O. Box 789

Abingdon VA 24212

Questions and Comments- abingdonnews@abingdon.com

Administration

| | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| <i>Greg Kelly</i> | Town Manager | <i>Cecile Rosenbaum</i> | Town Clerk |
| <i>Mark Godbey</i> | Finance Director | <i>Tony Sullivan</i> | Police Chief |
| <i>Myra Cook</i> | Tourism Director | <i>Floyd Bailey</i> | Information Technology |
| <i>Garrett Jackson</i> | Town Planner | <i>Jim Cowart</i> | Economic Development/Grant Writer |
| <i>Deb Icenhour</i> | Assistant Town Attorney | <i>John Dew</i> | Public Works Director (Streets Division) |
| <i>Marion Watts</i> | Building Inspection | <i>Jim Smith</i> | Public Works Director (Wastewater Division) |
| <i>Joey Burke</i> | Fire Chief | <i>Chris Johnson</i> | Parks & Recreation Director |

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